



NEWS RELEASE

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UNDER SECRETARY WILLIAM BURNS MEETS PRESIDENT AQUINO, HIGHLIGHTS US-RP COOPERATION

The Under Secretary for Political Affairs of the U.S. Department of State William J. Burns traveled to the Philippines July 20-21 to meet with senior officials in the Aquino Administration and representatives of Philippine civil society and business to discuss ways to advance cooperation between the United States and the Philippines.

Following his meeting with President Benigno Aquino III on July 20, Under Secretary Burns said "President Aquino and I reaffirmed our countries' commitment to close partnership and shared views on bilateral issues as well as regional and global challenges both our countries face." Under Secretary Burns, the U.S. Department of State's third-ranking official and its senior career diplomat, added "we look forward to working closely with his administration to continue our strong cooperation while finding new ways to move together to achieve our shared goals."

During his visit in Manila, the Under Secretary also met with Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima, Secretary of National Defense Voltaire Gazmin and several business and civil society leaders.

On July 21, Under Secretary Burns traveled to Zamboanga City and Cotabato City to emphasize U.S. commitment to peace and prosperity in Mindanao. Following his meetings with civil society leaders and local officials of Cotabato, the Under Secretary said the United States values its "friendships and partnerships with communities, local government units, provincial and regional governments, as well as the many civil society institutions we work with to help address the governance, peace, and development needs of Mindanao."

While in Cotabato City, Under Secretary Burns welcomed the Cotabato City State Polytechnic College into Job Enabling English Proficiency (JEEP), one of the U.S. Government funded English language programs, that enhances access to quality education in Mindanao. In his address to the students of the Cotabato City State Technical College, Under Secretary Burns called the JEEP program, "just one of many ways the United States is partnering with the Philippines to support education and development in Mindanao."

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